

## SOVIET POLICY IX WARTIME

On April 15, Mr. Casey, British Minister of State for the Middle East, arrived in Teheran and at a press conference did his best to impress his audience with the amount of help given Iran by Britain and the United States. He issued a warning to the press that their one-sided unfriendly attitude to the West would only harm the interests of Iran. He forcefully pointed out that the lack of shipping space was the result of bulky supplies of war materials to the Soviet Ally. The Minister's sudden visit and his energetic talk were generally regarded as a diplomatic countermove against the Soviet gesture. It proved that the British were on their guard, but it did not stop the Soviet Union from continuing relentlessly her long-range policy.

Aside from the economic inconveniences to Iran resulting from the division of the country, political consequences even more important developed. Shah Reza had been working assiduously to restore the unity of Iran. Now this unity was jeopardized. After 1941 the authority of the government extended, for practical purposes, only to Teheran and to the south, and even in the south it was limited by the resurgence of nomad tribes. In the north Iranian governors and officials could do nothing that might displease the Soviet authorities, and in many instances they were reduced to the role of puppets. In 1944-1945 it was impossible for the government to appoint a provincial governor to the Soviet zone if he was not acceptable to the Russians.

The Soviet authorities had recourse to political terror from the very day of their entry. A number of political refugees from the Caucasus, such as the Dashnaks or the Mussavatists, were arrested. Others mysteriously disappeared. This happened not only in

the north but also in Teheran, although the capital was in the neutral zone.<sup>6</sup> Freedom of the press, enjoyed in Teheran, only partly applied to the northern provinces. An open letter written in 1945 by the editor of the nationalist paper *Hur* to the editor of the Communist *Darya* vividly described the press restrictions in the Soviet zone. The letter said:

e Among those who were thus spirited away in Teheran can be mentioned Salim-zadeh (Salimoff), an octogenarian, who in the early twenties had co-operated with Sir Henry Deterding in the latter's Caucasian oil enterprises. Sir Henry had been a particular target of Soviet enmity.